

Giving blood could save someone’s life

By Senior Airman Sarah Kinsman
Kukini Editor

One pint of blood could mean life or death to someone.

This is a truth most people know, but something many may not know is the blood donations from Hickam are vital to Tripler Army Medical Center.

If a Tripler patient needs blood and the hospital doesn’t have any, they have to pay the Hawaii Blood Bank for blood, said Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Breton, Area Defense Council and Team Hickam Blood Program co-manager. “That’s why we donate each month.”

Even though some of the blood may go unused from the donations, if a need arose it would be better to have too much blood than not enough, said Sergeant Breton.

“It could go unneeded,” she said. “But I donate because it could help someone.”

The monthly goal for the drive is 30 donors. The last drive was Dec. 23 where 31 people donated blood.

Tripler Army Medical Center

not only uses blood for its local patients, but if there is a need within the Pacific region they send blood and they also send blood to Afghanistan, said Sergeant Breton.

The pool of blood donors is growing smaller due to restrictions such as people who have been in Afghanistan cannot donate blood for 12 months. That is why it is important for people who qualify to donate.

January is National Volunteer Blood Donor Month. The next blood drive is scheduled for Jan. 28. People interested in donating should contact their unit representative to make an appointment.

Giving blood is a good way to give back, said Sergeant Breton.

“I don’t have a lot of time to volunteer,” she said. “This is my way to give back.”

A different Team Hickam unit sponsors a blood drive each month. The drives are the fourth Thursday of each month from 9 a.m. to noon at the community center. For more information, contact Sergeant Breton at 449-2149.



Second Lt. Geoffrey Levine, 15th Contracting Squadron, donates blood during the blood drive Dec. 23 at the community center. January is National Volunteer Blood Donor month.

Drop of blood – saved a life

By Capt. Laura Palm
Pacific Air Forces

The ring of a nearby phone broke the peaceful silence of the night. Getting phone calls in the wee hours of the night was nothing unusual for Major John Oh, the validating flight surgeon for patient movement in the Pacific Theater. On the other end of the phone was a patched call from the U.S. Coast Guard Search and Rescue Controller requesting something extraordinary.

It was Sept. 19, 2004, 1547 Zulu time, when the USCG received a phone call from “The Royal Caribbean Cruise Line” headquartered in Miami requesting a blood drop to one of their ships, the “Radiance of the Seas.”

This vessel was enroute from Canada to Hilo, Hawaii due to arrive on the big island in two more days. On board was a 73-year-old male in distress with an apparent upper gastrointestinal bleed. He was in critical need of four units of blood to save his life. His condition was too unstable to be medically evacuated at that point.

Major Oh immediately contacted the Blood Bank of Hawaii — who cooperated in obtaining blood for the patient. He then turned the case over to his colleague, Dr. (Lt Col) Jimmy Barrow, who was the

flight surgeon on call for the day.

Dr. Barrow was able to make contact with Dr. Hansen, the ship doctor and found out the patient was typed and cross-matched for A positive blood. He also learned the patient’s hemoglobin had dropped to a critical 5.0 mg/dl. He was able to obtain four units of A positive blood from BBH with four transfusion sets. They packaged them in a waterproof container on wet glistening ice for transport. Dr. Barrow then drove the cargo to Barber’s Point Air Station, Oahu, Hawaii.

The container was loaded onto an HC-130 that was standing by for its life-saving cargo. They attached a parachute to the container for the drop. The Coast Guard took off at 1949 Zulu. The ship was approximately 800 miles from Oahu. At 2245 Zulu the HC-130 spotted the “Radiance of the Seas” cruise liner.

The Captain decided to inform the passengers on the ship what was about to happen. Fascinated by the event, many spectators ran to one side of the boat causing the 13-story high cruise liner to tilt. It was like watching a movie in action. The CG first dropped a smoking flare to mark their target. Then they circled back around and dropped the cargo alongside the cruise ship. “It was a surreal moment as the canister came

floating down in its parachute, making a bulls eye target,” said one operator. Suddenly, a tiny raft racing for the canister emerged. The crowd cheered.

The blood was rushed to Dr. Hansen who was with the patient in their intensive care unit. The patient was stabilized and made it to Hilo where he was hospitalized briefly until he was discharged home to Canada.

The ironic thing about this event was that a similar scenario had been practiced just 20 days before in a joint exercise with TPMRC-P, the USCG Joint Rescue Coordination Center and the U.S. Army Special Medical Augmentation Response Team.

All TPMRC-P personnel had been recalled for a civilian cruise line ship explosion to practice moving mass casualties. In the exercise, Major Oh had contacted BBH for blood. When this real-world emergency arose, the USCG knew exactly who to call.

Two weeks after the occurrence, the “Radiance of the Seas” pulled into port on Oahu. To show their gratitude to the TPMRC-P staff, Dr. Hansen rolled out the red carpet and provided a luncheon and tour of their medical capabilities. The team was presented with a letter of appreciation and photos of the HC-130 dropping the blood that saved a person’s life.

Donation restrictions

People who have any of the following cannot donate:

- Tattoos or Body Piercing within past 12 months
- Cold/Antibiotics within past 72 hours
- Donated Blood within past 8 weeks
- Medical Conditions (heart, liver, kidney disease; cancer; HIV, hepatitis)
- Certain Vaccinations within past four weeks
- Certain Medications
- Dental (cleaning within 24 hours, extractions within 72 hrs)
- Malaria country (visited malaria endemic country) to include Korea (travel north of the 37th parallel will be deferred; length of the deferral depends on the length of stay in Korea)
- Europe (1980-1996 for six months or more in Western Europe, 1980-1996 in UK for three months or more, After 1996, if greater than 5 years total).
- Do not weigh at least 110 pounds
- Are pregnant. (you may donate again six weeks after delivery)
- Have a cold, flu, or flu-like symptoms. (you are eligible to donate once you have been feeling better for three days)

Some malaria endemic countries

Afghanistan	China	Guatemala	Philippines
Argentina	Costa Rica	Honduras	Saudia Arabia
Bangladesh	Dominican Republic	India	Somalia
Bolivia	Egypt	Indonesia	South Africa
Brazil	El Salvador	Iraq	Thailand
Cambodia	French Guiana	Mexico	Turkey